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Speech and Language Development Program Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Elementary Program in Compensatory Education 2, It Works.

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During 1966-1967, Negro and Spanish-American pupils in grades 1 and 2 of seven Milwaukee elementary schools received a program of intensive assistance from trained speech therapists. The goals of the program were (1) to increase the verbal ability of disadvantaged children to enable them to compete with middle-class children of the same age, and (2) to compile a list of effective techniques developed by the project therapists. Two experimental samples (273 students) and two control samples were randomly selected from students in the lower 85% of their classes. Students in the experimental sample met in groups of from 6 to 8 students with a therapist for 45 minutes, 4 days a week for 15 weeks. The students talked, listened, and carried out activities, such as illustrating stories. The effectiveness of the program was tested by the Ammons Quick Test of verbal-perceptual intelligence, the evaluation of tape-recorded samples of the children's speech by therapists not involved in the program, and the evaluation of the students' performances by their classroom teachers and by project therapists. Although the results do not completely aggree, evidence indicates that this program of compensatory education was successful. (Sample units from the program and lists of therapy techniques are included.) (LH)

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OE-370-28
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SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

IT WORKS

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IT WORKS

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
MILWAUKEE

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FOREWORD

This project report is part of an independent study of selected exemplary programs for the education of disadvantaged children completed by the American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, Calif., under contract with the U.S. Office of Education.

The researchers report this project significantly improved the educational attainment of the disadvantaged children involved. Other communities, in reviewing the educational needs of the disadvantaged youngsters they serve, may wish to use this project as a model - adapting it to their specific requirements and resources.

Division of Compensatory Education
Bureau of Elementary and Secondary
Education

THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Introduction

In this program culturally disadvantaged pupils in seven elementary schools who were exhibiting a lack of oral language ability received intensive assistance from trained speech therapists, up to 3 hours a week. The therapists taught the children in groups of six to eight for up to 15 weeks.

The pupils were drawn from grades one and two, and were in 17 classes in schools situated in poverty districts of Milwaukee designated as a "target area" by the Social Development Commission of that city. The neighborhood is about 70% Negro and 15% Spanish-American, and is characterized by high population mobility and density. The families in it are large, often with either no father or a non-working father. The adults in the families do not communicate much verbally at home or else are seldom present. The children are not usually taken outside the neighborhood. Adults from the area are employed in occupations such as domestic servant, hospital aid, unskilled laborer (seasonal); a large percentage is on welfare.

The Milwaukee Public Schools already employed speech therapists before this program was inaugurated. They were assigned to the schools, and dealt with the conventional type of speech problem such as lisping and stuttering. This program was first implemented in February, 1966, although the evaluation described here covers only the 1966-67 school year. It offered through specially selected speech therapists a curriculum rich in verbal and auditory stimuli, with many opportunities for manipulative and play experiences, and a series of strucural units, all with the aim of teaching skills in verbal usage. Some 273 children were taught in the program in the 1966-67 year.

In the absence of more appropriate measures, the Ammons Quick Test of verbal-perceptual development was used to assess the benefits of the program. Significant gains over control groups were reported for the first experimental sample of 136 pupils.

Personnel

A. Project Supervisor. (Part-time; the Supervisor of Speech Therapy for Milwaukee Public Schools; M.A. and a state license in

special education; 20 years of experience in special education as teacher and administrator.)

The supervisor was responsible for the selection of schools, classes and personnel for the program. She also organized the inservice orientation and training of the program staff, ordered supplies and wrote summary reports and budgets when these were needed.

B. Project Speech Therapist. (Full-time; at least B.A. and a state license in speech therapy; chosen for knowledge of the effects of cultural deprivation, of child development, of speech and language development, and of educational and teaching procedures in the kindergarten and primary school; an average of 7 years' experience.)

The chief work of the project speech therapists was with the small groups of children with limited or reduced verbal ability or oral language delay. In addition, they were responsible for some aspects of speech and language evaluation during the program, for the preparation of materials and the planning of activities for speech and language stimulation, and the compilation of materials and the development of techniques which they found to be specially suitable for the program.

Methodology: General

The assumption was made in this program that many children in each of the classes chosen would need help of the kind being offered. Hence the decision was made to allocate pupils from these classes to experimental and control groups on a random basis. To eliminate the few in each class who would certainly have no need of the treatment, the project therapists chose the bottom 85 percent of a rank ordered class list for each class. The rank ordering was based on teacher recommendations regarding verbal ability, the results of a speech articulation test, and the therapists' own judgment. From the bottom 85 percent, pupils were randomly assigned to first and second experimental groups, and to first and second control groups. From any one classroom, some 25 pupils might be in the program, roughly six in each group. The first experimental group received treatment mainly during the first semester, the second during the second.

The stated objectives of the program were:

1. To create in disadvantaged children, who are presenting a verbal language delay, skills in verbal usage which would

enable them to function in competition with middle-class children of like age.

2. To compile a "curriculum" guide of effective techniques developed and employed by the project therapists for use by itinerant therapists and regular classroom teachers.

The experimental group from each classroom met one of the project speech therapists for 45 minutes per day Monday through Thursday, for 15 weeks. During these periods the chief pupil activities were talking, listening and manipulating, in that order of importance. For instance, pupils would talk about who lived in their homes. Then they might listen to a record entitled "Robert and his family." The flannel boards might be used afterwards for the pupils to illustrate what they had said or heard. Thus talking by the pupils might occupy the group as much as 2 hours a week or perhaps 20 minutes for some individual pupils. Listening might occupy 1 hour, and manipulation rather less. The balance varied from group to group and from week to week. Of course, during these therapy periods, pupils in the group were missing normal classroom activities.

Specific examples of typical aspects of the program follow in the next section.

Methodology: Specific Examples

A. "Language Line" was a one-page newsletter designed to acquaint regular classroom teachers and parents with the program. Part of the first issue read:

> The child speaks the language of his environment. You have all heard phrases like the following: "he home," "I ain't had no go," "my mother, she," "all him stuff."
>
> This is indicative of the child's informal language. For this purpose, it fulfills the needs of his immediate environment. Although adept in their informal language, many have not developed the formal language necessary to function adequately in a school setting.
>
> We can define language as the avenue by which we understand, interpret, and communicate both concrete and

abstract ideas. A child's ability in this area defines and determines who he is, what he is, and what he will become. Retardation in language can, and often does, lead to academic failure and social maladjustment.

As you are probably aware, from your own experience, the following characteristics are often found in the disadvantaged child:

- poor listening habits
- poor comprehension of the spoken word
- limited vocabulary (difficulty in labeling and classifying)
- immature sentence structure, (speaks in phrases, misuse of pronouns, etc.)
- weakness in abstract thinking
- poor retention
- high degree of distractability

B. A unit on the development of oral-verbal language skills was prepared by the staff of the program. This passage is from the introduction:

Language is acquired through the individual's senses by daily auditory and visual experiential and environmental stimulation. The child hears and imitates the sounds, words, intonations, sentence patterns, and all the subtleties of the language used by those around him. Both the experiences and language to which he is exposed contribute to the quality and quantity of his verbal performance.

<u>Language Deficiencies of Disadvantaged Children</u>

All children learn the language of their environment. Disadvantaged children are no exception, for they have a well-structured informal language. However, many have not developed the formal language used in the school setting. When they enter school, this formal language used by the teacher (and the larger segment of society) sounds almost foreign to them, and they become either acquiescent or tune-out much of the conversation. In this school setting, the following characteristics become evident:

- Limited vocabulary
- Immature sentence structure
- Poor comprehension
- Difficulties in classification
- Inability to see relationships
- Inability to sequence
- High degree of distractability
- Poor retention
- Poor listening habits
- Weak in abstract thinking
- Little imagination

Many children may exhibit some of these characteristics. However, disadvantaged children tend to evidence them to a greater degree and to a greater extent.

C. From the same unit:

The Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities influenced the thinking of the therapists and assisted them in developing a curriculum. The nine language abilities isolated and evaluated by the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities were reduced for project purposes into the following four categories.

Decoding	Memory	Association	Encoding
Understanding both auditory and visual stimuli.	Retaining, reproducing, and recalling what has been heard or seen.	Thinking, reasoning, problem--solving, and seeing relation-ships.	Expressing oneself through motor and verbal modalities

Activities related to the areas defined in the above table are listed on the following pages. Many of these activities will be familiar to the classroom teacher, but are included to illustrate how they may be used specifically to build and strengthen various language abilities.

Each therapist used the Peabody Language Development Kit as an experimental device in two of her five classes in order to evaluate its effectiveness. It was found to be a very worthwhile supplementary tool. Its stimulating material can be used in a variety of ways to develop many facets of language.

Basically, a unit approach was used in planning daily activities since it provided for an organized progression of related ideas. One example of such a unit is included. It illustrates the many ways in which language development can be incorporated into the classroom procedures.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

DECODING

(Understanding Stimuli)

Auditory

1. Read stories aloud. Ask questions to check understanding.
2. Play "Simon Says," "Captain, May I?" and games requiring following directions.
3. Have children listen to records and tapes for purposes of identification.
4. Ask children to complete nursery rhymes or finger play begun by teacher.
5. Deliberately give children wrong answer to check if they are listening and understand.
6. Begin a sentence and have children complete it.
7. Ask riddles which require pupils to decode.
8. Play game of "gossip." Whisper a word, phrase, or sentence to one child and have him pass it on. Last child repeats aloud.

DECODING
(cont.-)

Visual

1. Have children label or identify objects or pictures.

2. Have children find and cut pictures from magazines for specific purpose.

3. Ask pupils to identify the action in pictures or the activity being pantomimed.

4. Lead children to identify shapes, sizes, colors, etc., within their environment.

5. Let children find hidden figures within a picture.

MEMORY

Auditory

1. Have children memorize poems, finger plays, nursery rhymes, songs, etc., and recite them.

2. Require children to repeat a series of numbers or words. Can be done in reverse order.

3. Have children carry out a series of verbal commands.

4. Read short stories that require the children to recall specific details.

5. Ask children to retell a story that the teacher read or told. Flannel board figures may be utilized for visual assistance.

6. Play word addition games such as "I went to grandmother's house and took a _____."

Auditory (cont.)

Each child names a new thing plus repeating previously mentioned items.

7. Encourage children to recall previous days' activities.

8. Use Language Master, one headset, and sentence cards. Present each child with a sentence which he must retain until the entire group has heard their sentences. Make a comparison between child's version of the sentence and the original sentence. Group can judge.

Visual

1. Present a series of objects of pictures: remove them and have children recall.

2. Arrange a series of objects or pictures. Remove or mix-up and have children reproduce sequences.

3. Show picture or puzzle and remove. Show said picture with parts missing. Ask children to name all missing parts.

4. Have children observe one child. After child leaves the room, ask others to describe what he was wearing.

ASSOCIATION

1. Let children classify or categorize objects or pictures. For example, associate: person with clothing, room with furniture, store with item purchased, animal with habitat, clothes with season.

2. Play a speed-up game. Give children a limited amount of time to name all the things they can in a certain category. For example, "Name all the fruits you can think of."

3. Play elimination game. Select a category. A child failing to name an item within the given category is eliminated.

4. Set up problem situations and have children solve them. For example, "If you got lost, what would you do?"

5. Present a series of words or group of pictures, and ask children to eliminate the one that does not belong.

6. Ask questions involving absurdities such as "Would I find an elephant in the bathtub? Why or why not?"

7. Have children supply a word which is opposite to the one presented by the teacher.

8. Ask children how two or more things are alike or different. Initially accept concrete relationships, but gradually encourage more abstract responses.

9. Present a word, phrase or situation which might elicit a picture in the children's minds, such as "fire." Ask the questions, "What do you see? What do you smell? What do you feel? What do you hear?"

ENCODING
(Expressing Oneself)

Vocal

1. Display a picture and have children describe specific objects.

2. Build a story using flannel board sets, stand up pictures, or figures. Encourage children to use their imagination to create the story.

3. Have students describe objects or persons giving as many clues as possible: color, size, shape, function, etc.

4. Ask children to make up riddles to describe something.

5. Use Language Master and set of cards. (Verb: Action Words). Show picture on card so that the sentence is not visible. Ask one, or several, in group to create a sentence about the picture. Have group listen to card and compare children's sentence with one on card.

6. Let children create different ending for stories read to them.

7. Discuss field trips and home and classroom experiences.

8. Use See-quees and comic strips mounted on tag board to stress story sequence.

9. Create a situation and have children role play using telephone or puppets.

10. Have children keep a weekend diary. This can be a class project. (Keep a record of sentence growth - length and complexity).

11. Encourage children to learn and recite rhymes, songs, poems, and finger plays.

12. Have children dramatize stories and rhymes.

13. Stimulate general conversation.

ENCODING
(cont.-)

Motor

1. Encourage children to pantomime stories, nursery rhymes, poems and situations.

2. Ask children to reproduce rhythmic slapping patterns.

3. Let children perform accompanying actions to finger plays and songs.

4. Have children tape song and pantomime appropriate motions.

5. After discussions, permit children to draw a picture for reinforcement.

6. Show action pictures and have children supply appropriate motor responses.

7. Ask children to act out description of various words such as "large," "short," "tired."

8. Ask children, "How many ways can you cross the mat?" How many ways can you move the bell without using your hands?"

9. Use Frostig materials.

D. "The City" was the topic used in the unit as a basis for language development activities. The unit has these general language objectives:

1. To understand what one senses (hearing, seeing, smelling, testing, touching)

2. To distinguish differences and similarities

3. To sequence

4. To label

5. To classify

6. To express oneself

7. To develop divergent thinking skills

8. To associate

E. The materials used as accessories for this unit were well-known elementary school items, including books, filmstrips, flannelgraphs, records, pictures, puppets, dolls' houses, and the Language Master. The Peabody Language Development Kit, and the Holt, Rinehart and Winston Sounds and Patterns of Language were also used a good deal.

F. The introductory section of another unit, on the self concept, is quoted below:

Objectives

> One of the main objectives of the language development program is to help a child express himself. In order to do this, it is necessary to help him develop his own concept of himself. He needs to know who he is and how he fits into his immediate environment. This environment includes his family, his peers, his teachers.

PROCEDURES

Introduction

a) Have everyone say his name, including his last name.
b) To the tune of "Where is Thunkin" sing "Where is Mary." The children sing, "Here I am."
c) Teach each child to introduce himself.
d) Hang name tags on the bulletin board and have the children choose their own name tag.
e) Have the children draw pictures of themselves and print their own names. Do this at the beginning of the semester, for comparison.

f) Take a photograph of each child for bulletin board display and later send it home as a gift.
g) Tape record each child's voice.
h) Use magnetic cards from sounds and patterns for introducing and recognizing names.

MATERIALS

1. Tape recorder

2. Camera

3. Tagboard, paper, etc.

4. Sounds and Patterns of Language

Books:

William, Andy, and Ramon
Five Friends in School
Living as Neighbors
The Ugly Duckling
Just One Me
Your Face is a Picture
Exploration of Basic Movements in Physical Education
No Place for Jenny
The Witch Next Door
The Boy Who Wanted Duck Feet

Evaluation

A. Measures of Achievement

The evaluators of this program recognized that there are few tests available which are even remotely suitable for testing language improvement in disadvantaged children. Those which exist, such as the Wepman Auditory Discrimination Test, were developed with other purposes in mind than that of this program. The decision was made to use the Ammons Quick Test of verbal-perceptual intelligence, a short version of the Ammons Full Range Picture Vocabulary Test. The evaluators state that:

> A combination of two forms of the same test was used at each observation to increase the validity and reliability of the test results obtained. Forms 1 and 2

were administered in September at the start of the project to randomly sampled pupils in one experimental and one non-experimental group and Forms 1 and 3 were given at the middle observation 4 months later in January to the same pupils, plus the second treatment and non-treatment groups. Forms 2 and 3 were used at the final observation 4 months later in May with the entire evaluation sample.

At the start of the program, the four groups were roughly matched on age and grade level, on IQ (based on the Pintner-Cunningham Intelligence Test which showed a mean of 84), and on socio-economic background. The evaluators do not indicate whether the first experimental and first control groups were matchable on the Ammons scores for September.

On the January Ammons testing, the first experimental group, which had received treatment, performed significantly better (at the 5 percent level) than did any of the other three groups which had not received treatment. A test practice effect was also observed for the first control group, which increased its mean significantly.

On the May Ammons testing, the first experimental group maintained its superiority over the other groups without having had further treatment beyond January. The second experimental group was not able to gain a mean score significantly better than the two control groups. The evaluators explain this result by saying that the first experimental group experienced gains of a cumulative nature, continuing to maintain the gain made during the treatment period. Presumably this means that pupils in the first experimental group were able to consolidate their ground during the second 4-month period, whereas those in the second experimental group had not been able to do so. The means for the groups in January and May are given in Table 1.

Besides the Ammons Quick Test, several other measures or ratings of oral language ability were used. First, classroom teachers' rankings of the program pupils on four critical factors were compared at the beginning and end of the 15-week treatment period. No significant differences were detected.

Therapists not connected with the program were asked to rate tape-recordings for randomly selected samples drawn from the experimental groups before and after treatment. The tape-recordings were each three minutes long, and were rated on seven characteristics. The ratings

Table 1

MEAN SCORES ON THE AMMONS QUICK TEST FOR FOUR SAMPLES IN THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM, JANUARY AND MAY 1967

Group	January	May
First experimental group	34.7	35.4
Second experimental group	30.4	33.7
First control group	32.6	32.7
Second control group	31.0	31.9

[Source: Tables 5 and 6, pp. 19 and 20, Milwaukee Public Schools (1967)]

showed highly significant improvement (at the 1 percent level) for both experimental sub-samples. No ratings were made of sub-samples drawn from the control groups.

Both the regular classroom teachers and the project therapists rated pupils in the experimental groups before and after treatment using seven characteristics related to participation and language. The classroom teachers did not think that the first experimental group had improved significantly in their <u>classroom</u> participation and language behavior, but the therapists' ratings on all seven characteristics showed significant improvement (at the 1 percent level) for the first experimental group in their <u>therapy group</u> participation and language behavior. For the second experimental group (which did not score so well as the first on the Ammons Quick Test), the teachers agreed with the therapists that there was significant improvement in four of the seven characteristics, but still did not agree on the remaining three. The evaluators speculate that these results were caused by the teachers becoming more sensitive in observing changes.

On <u>individual</u> ratings of pupils, the teachers and therapists showed a good degree of agreement.

B. Other Evaluation Indices

Apart from attendance records, which were kept by the project therapists, administrator and teacher reactions to the program as a whole were obtained. These were generally favorable.

C. Modifications and Suggestions

The program has been repeated, but with one important change. Instead of randomly selecting pupils to suit the experimental design used, the program personnel assigned pupils for treatment solely on the basis of need.

Budget

The program budget to serve 273 pupils amounted to $39,000, not counting donated time, overhead costs, or the costs of accommodation, which was available in the schools already. Equipment accounted for only $800, but items originally costing over $16,000 were used too, these being in stock from earlier projects. We might say that the cost per pupil to replicate this program would probably be not less than $200 per year.

Quoted Sources

* Milwaukee Public Schools. Program for developing speech and language skills in the educationally deprived child through the utilization of the specialized training of speech therapists. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, 1967.

* Milwaukee Public Schools. Suggested activities and unit study in developing oral-verbal language skills. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, 1967.

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